

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The switch has a passive section and an active section or tray that may be docked to the passive section. The passive section contains only the physical interfaces to the switch's external data and telephony networks and power input. It is not intended to be a field replaceable unit and is therefore intended to be mounted in a rack system with all of the power and communications cables attached thereto. The telephony and data ports are routed from the passive section to the active section via connectors on the two sections as well as to a redundancy connector on the passive section that may be physically connected by a cable to a slave unit in a redundant application. The active section or tray contains all of the active components of the switch and is inserted via guides into the passive section. The tray is considered a field replaceable unit and can be inserted into and extracted from the passive section while the system is powered up and operational. As a result of its unique two-section design, the present switch has several advantages. For example upon failure, all active components of the system may be replaced without removing the mounting hardware from the rack in which the switch is mounted and without removing any cables connected to the switch. Also when the switch is part of a redundant system, when the switch fails, all of the active components of the switch may be replaced without interrupting system operations.